

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION



PRESS RELEASE

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Higher Education Commission Opposes California Race, Ethnic, Color, and National Origin Initiative

July 22, 2003 – Sacramento – At its meeting on July 22, 2002, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) adopted (on a vote of seven to one, with one abstention) a resolution that expresses its opposition to the California Race, Ethnic, Color, and National Origin (CRENCO) Initiative that will appear before voters at the State's next General Election.

"It is imperative that public policy analysis agencies like the Commission have access to the full range of data that are necessary for it to conduct its research. These data are used to assist decision makers in understanding the levels of participation of students from various populations at our state's colleges and universities," said Howard Welinsky, the Commission's Vice Chairman. "Without such data we wouldn't know whether institutions are in compliance with the Equal Opportunity laws of California and the United States," he said.

In its resolution, the Commission noted that "it is important that policy makers have available to them those data that are necessary to assess the effectiveness of state policies designed to achieve student diversity on the college campus." During its discussion, several Commissioners noted that the CRENCO would limit their ability to assess state programs that are designed to help students from a variety of race, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic groups achieve access to and success at the state's colleges and universities.

The Commission has had a long-standing commitment to ensuring that all Californians have the opportunity to benefit from a postsecondary education. "For nearly thirty years, the Commission has supported a variety of initiatives to ensure that people from all backgrounds are encouraged and enabled to pursue education after high school," said Robert L. Moore, the Commission's Executive Director. "In order for us to measure our success in achieving state goals of achieving broad student diversity on the college campus, we need complete information on the characteristics of students attending our colleges and universities," he said.

The Commission's resolution will be forwarded to the Governor, Legislature, and the People of California.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is on ensuring that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide as many Californians as possible an opportunity to pursue pathways to success through postsecondary education. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov.

California Postsecondary Education Commission

Resolution Opposing

The California Race, Ethnic, Color, and National Origin Initiative

- Whereas,** the California Postsecondary Education Commission has a long-standing commitment to promoting access to a postsecondary education for all Californians in the most fair and equitable manner; and
- Whereas,** the Commission is committed to assuring that California colleges and universities reflect the diverse nature of the State's population; and
- Whereas,** the Commission believes that student diversity on the college campus is defined by a variety of factors including race and ethnicity, gender, socio-economic characteristics, and geographic representation, among others; and
- Whereas,** it is important that the Governor and Legislature have available to them those data that are necessary to assess the effectiveness of state policies designed to achieve student diversity on the college campus; and
- Whereas,** the Commission collects race and ethnic data to serve several purposes, including: academic research; assessing applications, admissions, and the enrollment of students; evaluating the provision of financial aid; assessing outreach efforts to students who historically have not participated in higher education; examining faculty and staff employment; and for institutional planning and research; and
- Whereas,** the voters of California will consider at the next Statewide Election a Constitutional Amendment known as the California Race, Ethnic, Color, and National Origin Initiative that would limit the ability of governmental agencies like the Commission to collect data on race and ethnicity pertaining to students, faculty, and staff at California colleges and universities; and
- Whereas,** the Commission believes that it is imperative to have race and ethnicity information for it to continue to conduct high-quality research and policy analysis on behalf of the People of California; and
- Whereas,** the Commission is in partnership with the United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, which requires the collection of race and ethnicity data; now be it
- Resolved,** that the Commission opposes the imposition of any limitations on its ability to collect those data that are necessary for it to conduct its independent research, planning, and analysis responsibilities; and be it further
- Resolved** that the Commission opposes the California Race, Ethnic, Color, and National Origin Initiative, and that its opposition to this Initiative be transmitted to the Governor, Legislature, and People of the State of California.